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North Carolina A&T State University  
School of Agriculture and  
Environmental Sciences  
Newsletter  
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## CEPHTS food scientists forge global partnerships

**A**t the Center for Excellence in Post-Harvest Technologies, science doesn't begin and end in the lab. Researchers there say science in the public interest also means continually seeking partnerships with other nations and cultures.

Dr. Leonard Williams, interim director of the Center and lead scientist for food safety, says that because economies and food supplies are now globalized, it behooves agricultural scientists to understand how other nations grapple with common issues such as foodborne illnesses, food storage and processing.

"One way we can affect socio political issues related to agricultural development is to train scientists to grow better crops, to address foodborne illness, and to alleviate hunger," Williams said.

That desire to reach beyond the U.S. is why he recently applied for and won an Andrew Mellon HBCU Faculty Fellowship from the Salzburg Global Seminar, which funded his trip and attendance at a five-day seminar in Austria dedicated to closing the gender gap in agricultural development policies in Africa. The topic reflects the growing view in developing nations that the

lack of access to farmland and credit for women, who do much of the farm labor, is an impediment to a nation's economic development.

Williams has had a career-long interest in cultivating



**Dr. Leonard Williams**

international partners in agricultural sciences. He's served stints in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, where he trained scientists and industry in food safety methods, and, in 2008, he trained scientists from several African nations in rapid detection methods in food safety.

While Williams' trip to Europe deepened A&T's affiliation with Africa, Dr. Shengmin Sang's recent trip to Taiwan fostered continuing connections to Asia. Sang's attendance was the result of his winning a Young Investigator Award from the International Conference on Food Factors, an honor that placed him on the schedule of conference presenters in Taiwan. Sang, lead scientist for functional foods at the



**Dr. Shengmin Sang**

Center, reported on his recent work to understand the health promoting components in black tea, and also met scientists from other nations while exploring ideas for future collaborations.

"You should always understand what people from other countries are doing, and share your results. It leads to collaboration and possible funding as well," he said.

Sang also has made international outreach a large part of his work at the Center. He recently successfully initiated a

student exchange program in food sciences and nutrition between A&T and Nanjing Normal University in China that is expected to begin in the spring 2012 semester, and also serves as a faculty mentor for Introduction to Global Studies, a weekly teleconference course between A&T and Henan Polytechnic University in China.

"Activities such as these create linkages that will make our campus and the center even more global," Williams said. "We learn a lot from each other."

In addition, these activities also support the University's new strategic plan, A&T Preeminence 2020. One of the plan's important goals is to cultivate a diverse and inclusive campus community.

## The Randle Report

When you take on the role as dean of a school of agriculture, traditional students and faculty are just part of a group you are charged with serving. The other is the larger community of off-campus clients who depend on the findings and instruction offered by our land-grant university. The farmers in this state make up a significant part of that larger community.

As I continue to learn about our programs at N.C. A&T, I've had the opportunity to visit our University Farm and to meet with various groups of farmers from all across this state. One thing they tell me is that N.C. A&T is important to them and they continue to need our assistance and expertise. Although things are changing on campus, our commitment to this state's farmers, especially those small and limited-resource farmers, will not change.

In fact, we are committed all the more to do what is necessary so they can thrive and continue to provide economic viability in the communities where they are located.

This support is also critical as more of the country's citizens understand the value of local food and work to become good stewards of our natural resources. Our researchers are spending time making sure they are poised to answer any questions our farmers might have. And our Cooperative Extension staff is making sure that farmers get this information in a format that best serves their needs.

Farmers in general, and North Carolina's small farmers in particular, have an awesome responsibility. They feed, clothe and provide shelter for the rest of us. At A&T we want to make sure that they have all the latest innovations so they can be productive, informed and good stewards.

Our annual Small Farms Week is coming up March 25-31, 2012. We will use this time to showcase, on campus and across the state, innovations to assist small farmers and to highlight the work that farmers are doing. Please join us.

A&T is proud of the role we play in helping small farms achieve success, and we will continue to remain true to this critical mission of ours.

— **Dr. Bill Randle, Dean,**  
*School of Agriculture and  
Environmental Sciences*

## Cooperative Extension adds five new members to stakeholder advisory group



**David Autrey**



**Lenon Hickman**



**Gilbert Flowe**



**Marvel Welch**

His advocacy has also included serving on the Cabarrus County Nursing Home Committee, and as a voting-precinct judge.

Hickman is a Kenansville resident, who retired from the U.S. Postal Service in New York before moving with his wife to Duplin County. Hickman is a grower who serves on two small farmers' cooperatives. He has also worked with a Summer Enhancement Program teaching students to grow their own vegetables, and is a member of the Rural Empowerment Association for Community Help.

Locklear, of Robeson County, is an assistant professor of social work at UNC-Pembroke and is also pursuing a doctoral degree in human services. She has worked in various levels of social work practice including mental health, substance abuse counseling, cognitive behavior therapy and more. As a Lumbee Indian, Locklear is particularly devoted to maintaining a healthy and safe environment in the physical-mental-and-

emotional well being of Native American people.

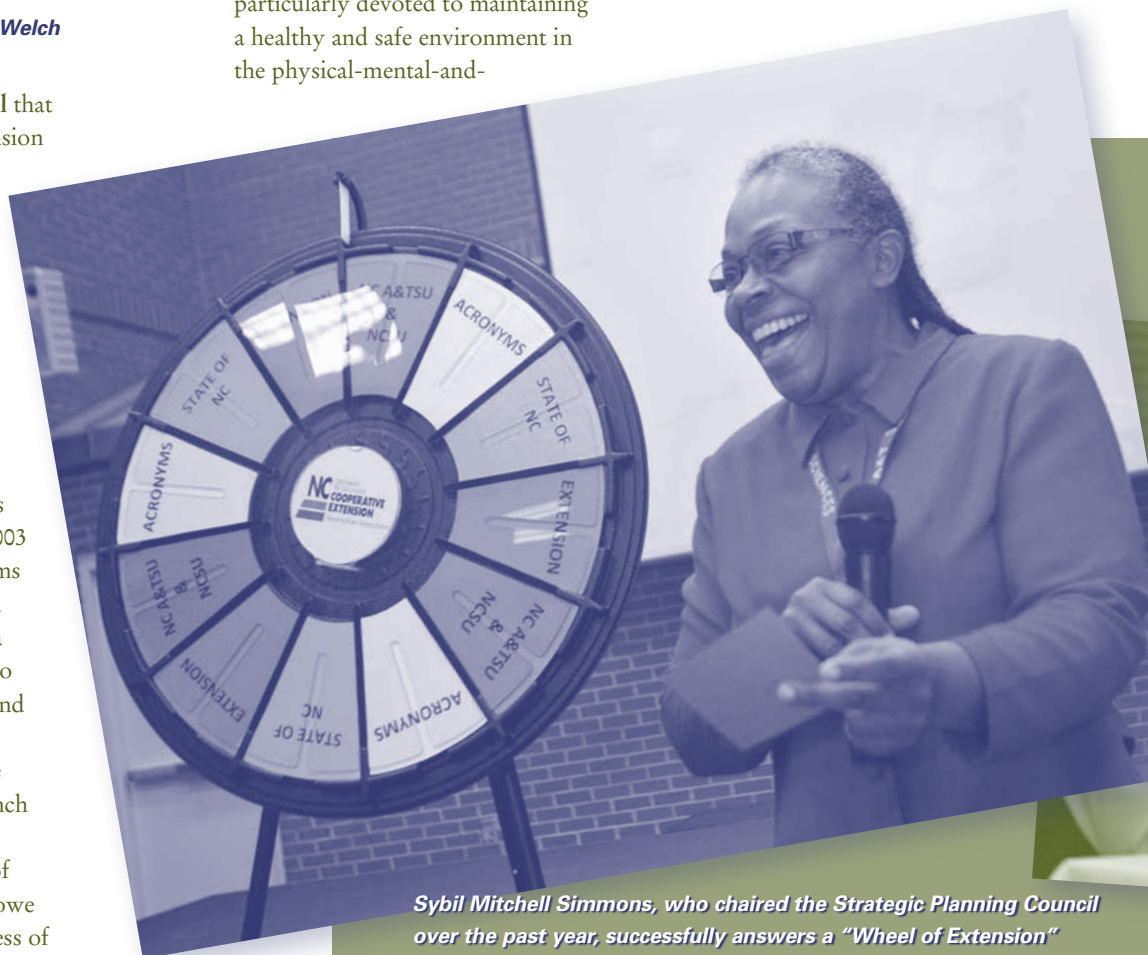
Welch, of Cherokee, has an extensive background in children's advocacy. She is a member of the Cherokee Youth Advisory Council and the Eastern Band of Cherokee's Extension Advisory Board, among other affiliations. Welch is also a guardian ad litem with the state judicial system and a certified substance abuse counselor. She is a candidate for a doctorate in public health at Walden University.

In other action at the SPC meeting, Ernestine Alston of Greensboro was seated as the group's new chairperson. The Guilford County native has been a 4-H volunteer for more than 26 years, helping young people develop life skills that prepare them for productive adulthoods. She was inducted into the N.C. Volunteer Achievement Hall of Fame, and has been active in local 4-H.

**T**he Strategic Planning Council that advises The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T welcomed four of five new members at its annual meeting on campus in November. David Autrey, Gilbert Flowe, Lenon Hickman, Marvel Welch and Alice Locklear are the newest additions to the advisory panel, although Locklear was unable to attend the meeting because of other obligations.

Autrey, of Yancey County, rejoins the council after having served from 2003 to 2007. He owns Millstone Cove Farms and Autrey Tree and Landscaping; and is on the Board of Advisors at his alma mater, Mars Hill College. Autrey is also a past president of the N.C. Nursery and Landscape Association.

Flowe, of Concord, is a long-time community advocate, as well as a staunch supporter of Cooperative Extension programs and activities. As president of his rural neighborhood association, Flowe was instrumental in the five-year process of getting water connections to 36 homeowners.



*Sybil Mitchell Simmons, who chaired the Strategic Planning Council over the past year, successfully answers a "Wheel of Extension" question during the SPC fall meeting. Simmons rolled off as chair and is now the SPC Liaison to the State Advisory Council at NC State.*



## Extension's statewide advisory network set to get fully plugged in

Local leaders from across the state are urged to discuss their communities' issues with The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T's advisory panel during workshops set for early 2012. The Strategic Planning Council is host of the 2012 Grassroots Conferences, set for locations in eastern, central and western North Carolina. Economic empowerment is a major focus of the workshops, which Dr. Rosalind Dale, an Extension regional program coordinator, is helping organize.

"Ideally, the folks who would come to the conference are already in their communities doing this sort of [outreach] work," Dale says. "But they may need more resources to have greater impact in their communities. We want to sit with these folks to see what they have to say; to find out if there is support that they may be able to get from Cooperative Extension and their county agents."

Members of the Strategic Planning Council will use the information gleaned from the grassroots conferences in helping Cooperative Extension shape its programs. Marketing Cooperative Extension programs was one of the primary focuses of the Strategic Planning Council's annual meeting at Coltrane Hall on campus last month.

Drs. Ray McKinnie and Claudette Smith, the administrator and interim associate administrator for Cooperative Extension, respectively, urged members to continue advocating for the programs. SPC members who are impressed by programs developed at A&T should return to their county Extension Centers to lobby for programs that can make a difference in their counties. Smith also reminded members that whenever they hear local complaints about problems, they should recommend Cooperative Extension's programs as potential solutions to issues.

Wendell Phillips, A&T's director of state and community relations, who gave members tips on how to approach lawmakers at the local, state and federal levels, also told members to tell good stories in addition to statistics.

"When you take a number and turn it into a living, breathing, person," Phillips said, "that makes all the difference in the world."

### Workshop dates and locations are:

**February 21, 2012**  
**Duplin County Extension Center**  
165 Agriculture Drive  
Kenansville, NC 28349  
9 a.m.–3 p.m.

**March 6, 2012**  
**Lee County Extension Center**  
2420 Tramway Rd  
Sanford, NC 27332  
9 a.m.–3 p.m.

**March 9, 2012**  
**Swannanoa 4-H Center**  
170 Woodland Drive  
Swannanoa, NC 28778  
9 a.m.–3 p.m.



Dr. Claudette Smith

Dr. Claudette L. Smith, the interim associate administrator for The Cooperative Extension Program whose commitment to the organization is exceeded only by her passion for it, has now been honored for that devotion.

Smith is one of four recipients of the Regional Awards for Excellence in Extension bestowed during the

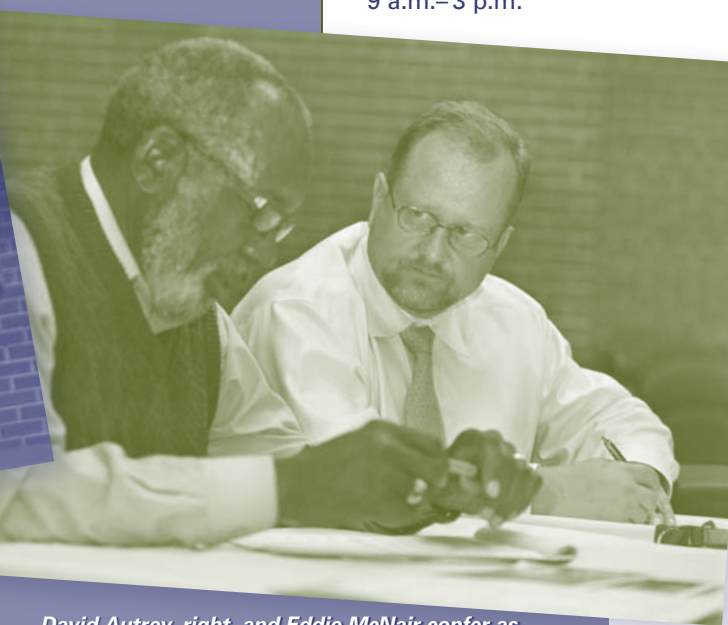
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities Annual Meeting Nov. 13–16 in San Francisco. Smith, who was nominated for the award by her predecessor, Dr. Celvia Stovall, was honored as the 1890 Region representative.

In her 34-year career with Cooperative Extension, Smith has been a tireless advocate for family and consumer sciences programs, as well as for 4-H Youth Development. Smith was lauded for — among other accomplishments — developing quality curricula and spearheading training to benefit limited-resource consumers. Smith was also recognized for bolstering 4-H programming at A&T, including leadership for a multidisciplinary team that developed the 2010 4-H National Science Experiment.

The APLU program biography describes Smith as "known for the passion and creativity she brings to her financial management presentations" and for how she "constantly motivates young people professionally and personally."

In addition to her interim administrative role with The Cooperative Extension Program, Smith is also the program leader for Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development, as well as a family resource management specialist.

Smith has a doctoral degree in family economics from The Ohio State University, a master's in consumer economics from Cornell University, and a bachelor's in home economics education from A&T.



David Autrey, right, and Eddie McNair confer as they participate in an advocacy exercise during the fall meeting of the Strategic Planning Council.

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